

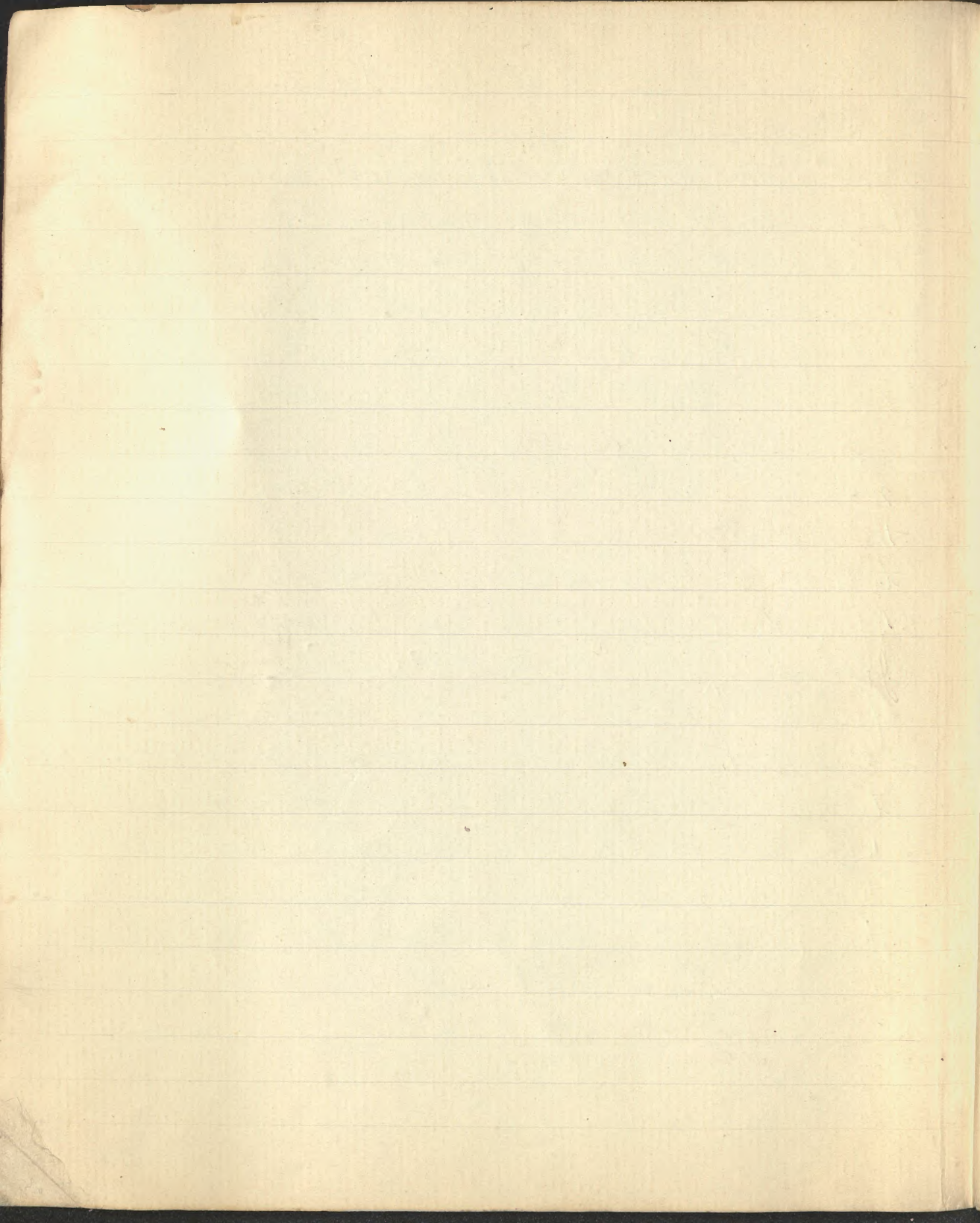
Crocker Land Relief

---



# Crocker Land Expedition Relief

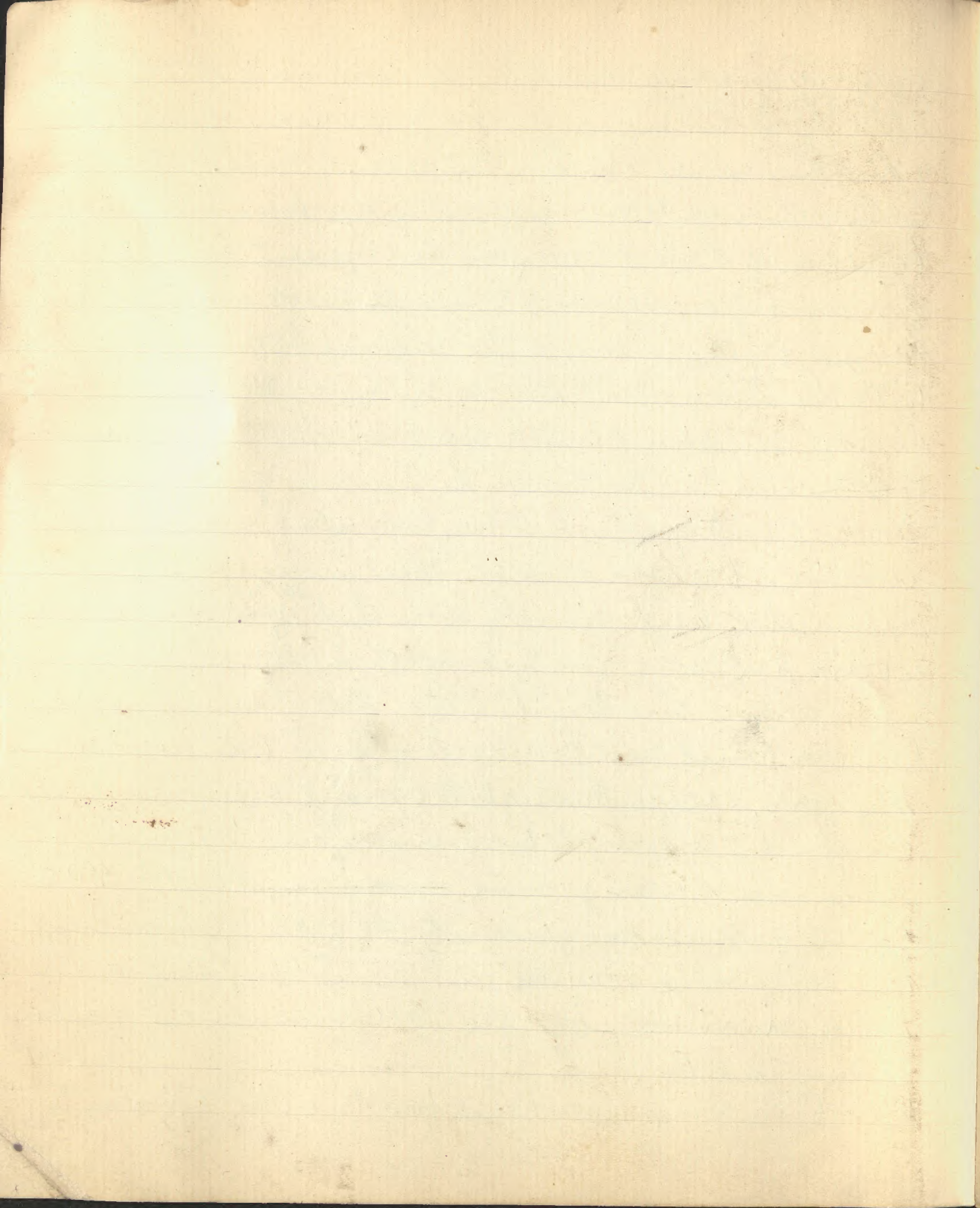
When the old Newfoundland sealer "Erik" came back after landing Mr. Macmillan and his party at Etah in August, 1913, from the Arctic in the fall of 1913, she brought letters from Mr. Macmillan and his staff telling of the safe landing of the party and their effects at the point where Peary had his headquarters at Etah in the winter of 1899-1900. They reported but few articles missing as a result of the grounding of the "Diana" in the Straits of Belle Isle and asked for certain supplies to be sent up the next year, if opportunity should offer. Although they had 500 tons of Sydney, N.S., coal, <sup>cook and mechanic of the party,</sup> Jot Small said that that was scarcely enough for one winter, to say nothing of two long, cold years but he was figuring on the basis of the consumption of the stove at the Cape Cod life-saving station where he had served for nine years and <sup>he</sup> could not realize the ease of warming the tightly built, snow-banked house which the Expedition was to have for its headquarters. In May/June, 1914, the winter mail from Etah arrived and reassured us as to there being coal enough for the two years ~~of~~ assigned to the Expedition's life in the Arctic. Little did



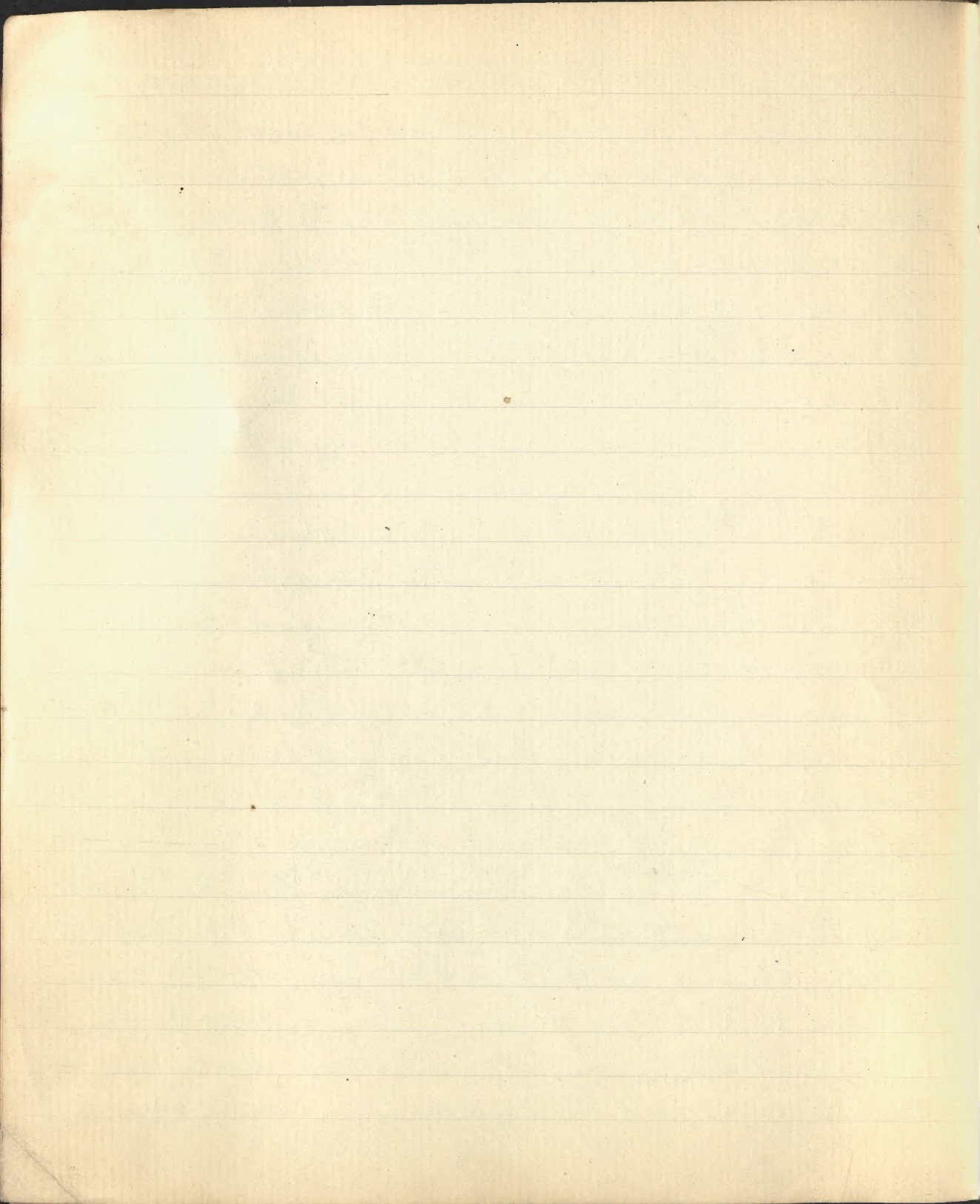
2

any of us suppose then that the coal and the provisions  
<sup>supplied to the Expedition</sup> would be called upon for ~~two~~ four years of service  
or that they could answer the call, if made. Nevertheless,  
The American Museum got together barometers to take  
the place of those broken on the voyage to Etah, a box  
of scientific supplies to take ~~the~~ make good the deficiency  
caused by the failure of the original box to connect  
with the "Diana" at Boston on the way northward, other  
desired supplies and much mail matter to be sent  
to Etah Mr. Mac Millan in the summer of 1914, since  
several enterprises had been proposed as means of trans-  
portation. One after another these projects failed to  
materialize and finally even that of <sup>a great mining man</sup> ~~Scott~~ <sup>Scott</sup>  
to visit his mineral prospects in the Jones Sound  
region, with a side trip to Etah, fell through, and  
thus we could not communicate with our men  
that year, except through the mail <sup>via</sup> Denmark.  
This goes by steamer to Upernivik <sup>Greenland</sup> and thence by dog  
sledge once a year <sup>Eskimo</sup> over the ~~summit~~ stretch of 400  
miles of sea ice and glacier to the Danish trading  
and scientific station at North Star Bay and  
thence similarly by special conveyance 140 miles  
farther to Etah

Great things were hoped for from the wireless tele.



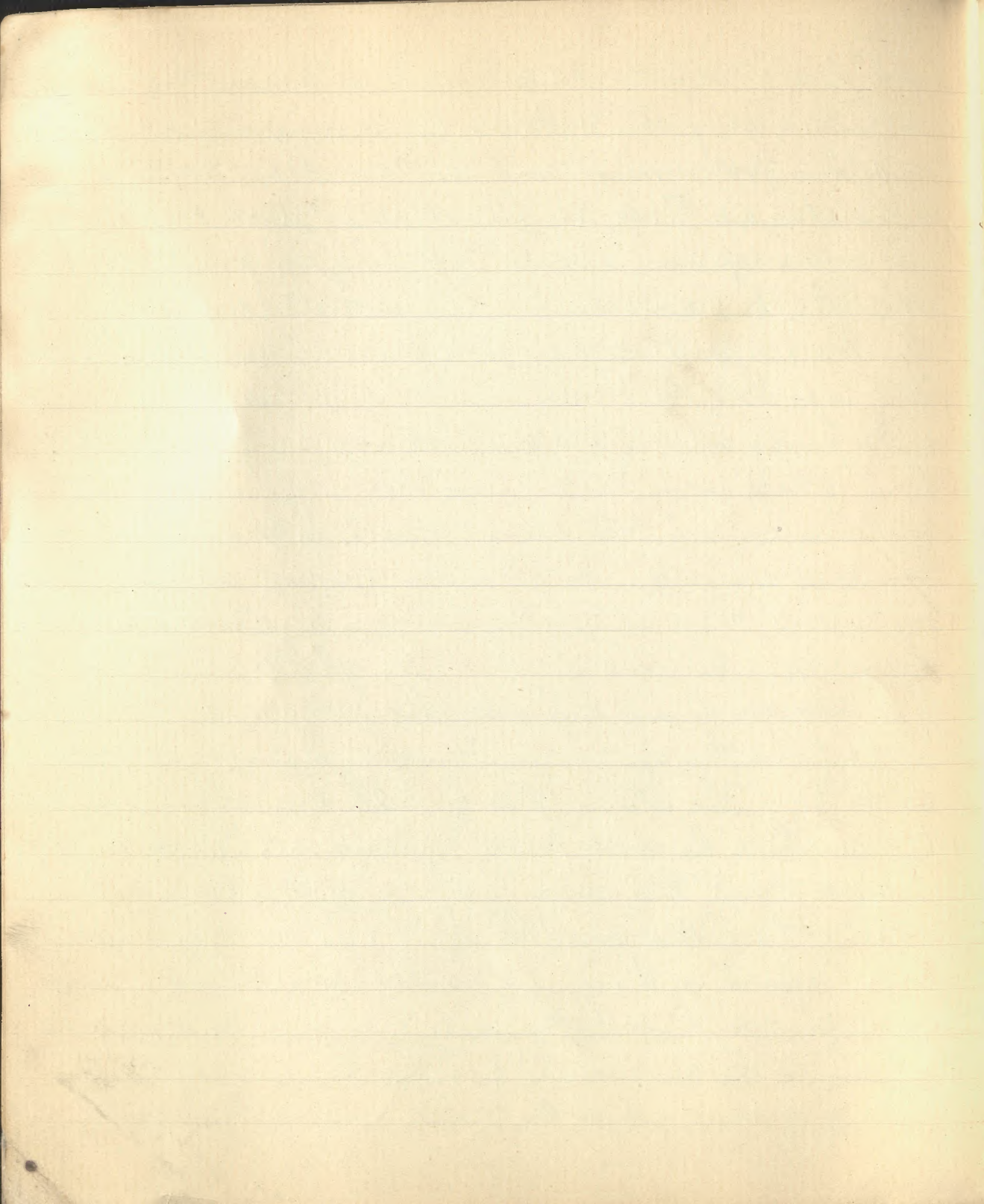
graph outfit that was taken by the Expedition. When, however, the season of 1913 passed without the establishment by the Canadian government of a wireless station at Cape Wostenholme, we felt discouraged as to the probability of our receiving any messages through lack of power in our apparatus to reach the nearest active station. Nevertheless we felt <sup>hopeful</sup> ~~sure~~ that our men could receive messages from us and <sup>we</sup> sent out despatches in November (Thanksgiving Day) and at Christmas (Quote any of the messages?) But the letters which left Etah at Christmas time in 1913 and <sup>arrived in N.Y.</sup> ~~reached us~~ the following June informed <sup>us</sup> of the failure ~~either~~ to receive any word at ~~the~~ Borup Lodge - as the Expedition Headquarters were named - from anywhere by wireless. Later we learned of the strenuous efforts that had been made to set up the apparatus and get into touch with the outside world, <sup>the</sup> first fall at the main house itself and the second fall and the second fall at a little island - Starr Island of Dr. Hayes - two miles out <sup>at the entrance to the Foulke fjord, two miles from headquarters,</sup> to sea, in a more exposed situation where the outlook toward the south <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ not ~~so~~ intercepted by near land of high altitude, as it is at the Lodge. As has been related by Mr. Mac Millan, aërials were erected, transmitters and receivers were installed, the engine, ~~and~~ ~~but~~ dynamo and storage batteries did their appointed





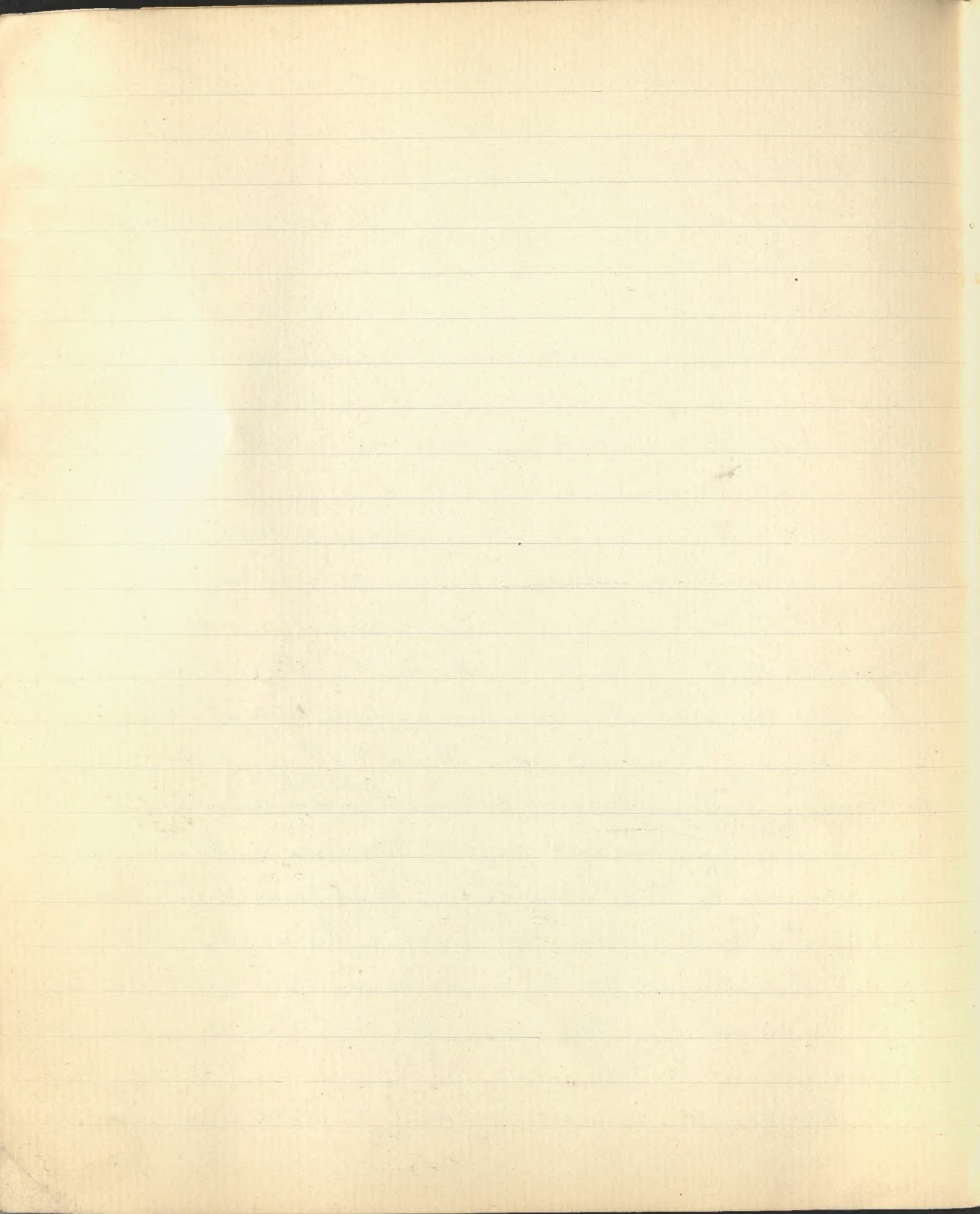
work but no signals were ~~to~~ received and none that were sent out reached any other station. By arrangement with the Canadian government and the Canadian Marconi Co. the operator at Fogo, Newfoundland, "stood by" on certain evenings every month listening in for signals from Etah but none reached his attentive ear.

The understanding with Mr. Mac Millan and his staff was that the Museum would provide for the return of the party in 1915, unless word were received that Crocker Land had been visited and that sufficient scientific work remained to be done to make a third year in the Far North desirable. In December, 1914, word reached us from Mr. Ekblaw that Messrs. Mac Millan and Green had returned from their journey on the ice of the Polar Sea and that "~~Crocker Land~~" did not exist there was no land in sight from the spot where "Crocker Land" was supposed to be. The storm that ~~he~~ held Mr. Ekblaw at the place where he met Knud Rasmussen's motor boat and sent out this word prevented that boat from getting to Etah and bringing out Mr. Mac Millan's own report on the quest for Crocker Land, but we inferred that the Expedition would be ready to return in the summer of 1915. Hence early in the spring of 1915, while the writer was absent on an



expedition to the Lesser Antilles, the Museum began to look about for a vessel to send to Etah for the members of the staff, their collections and the Expedition property that was to come back. Principally on account of the accident to the "Diana", which entailed unexpected expenditures amounting to about \$11,000, the funds of the Crocker Land Expedition were exhausted, and it seemed necessary to employ the cheapest means that could do the accomplish the task. A steamer being considered out of the question, a good auxiliary schooner was suggested as being the next best thing as being perfectly competent for the enterprise. Captain George Comer, a well-known whaling captain of long experience in Arctic waters, was engaged to ~~report upon~~ <sup>examine</sup> the several vessels that were available and he reported that the "George B. Cluett" ~~belonging to the Wilfred F. Greafell, <sup>medical</sup> mission among the fishermen of Labrador~~ seemed to meet requirements. Inasmuch as the Carnegie Institution of Washington gave a favorable report upon the work which this vessel had done for it in Hudson Bay in 1914, she was engaged for the relief of the Crocker Land Expedition.

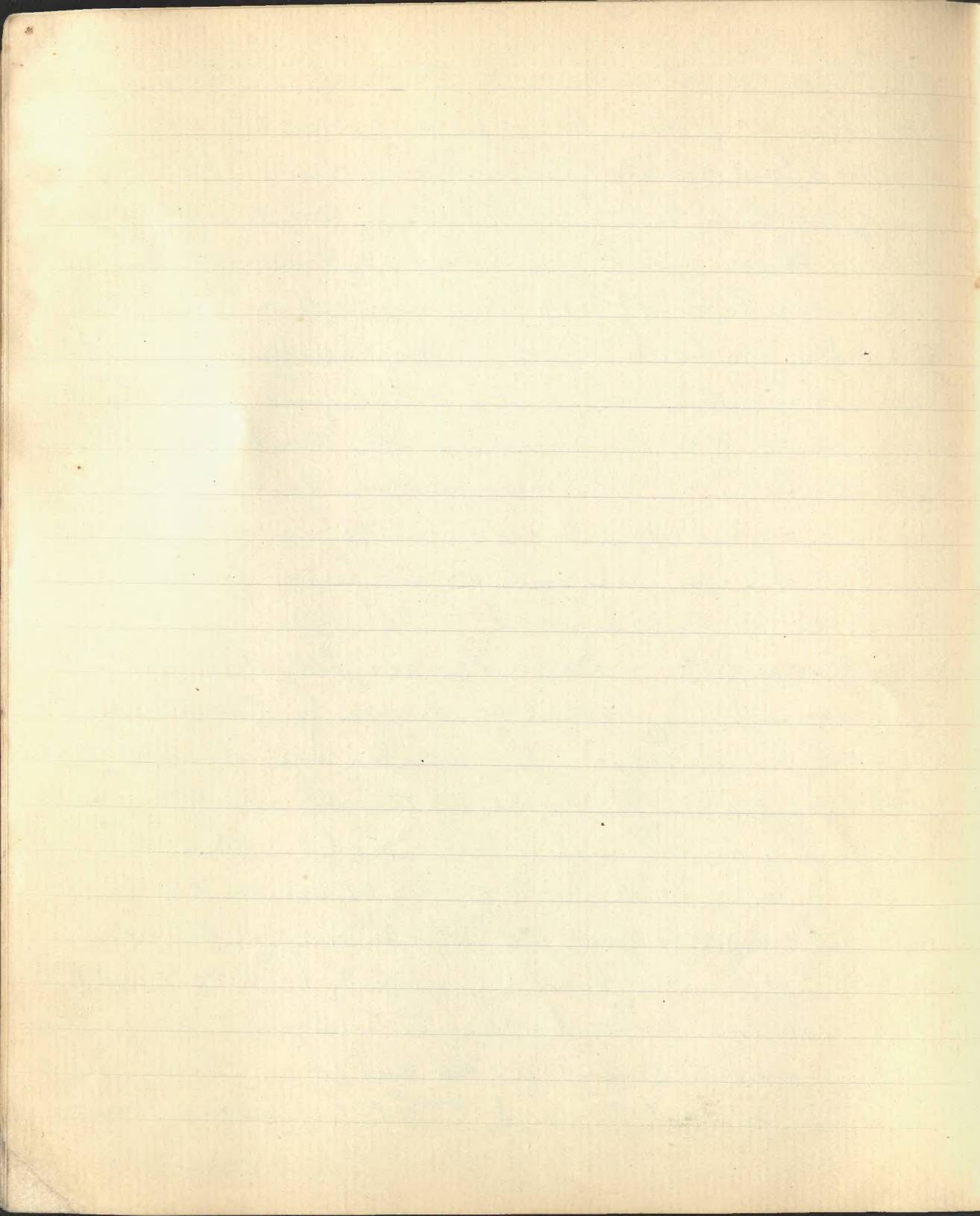
The "Cluett" is well known to the American



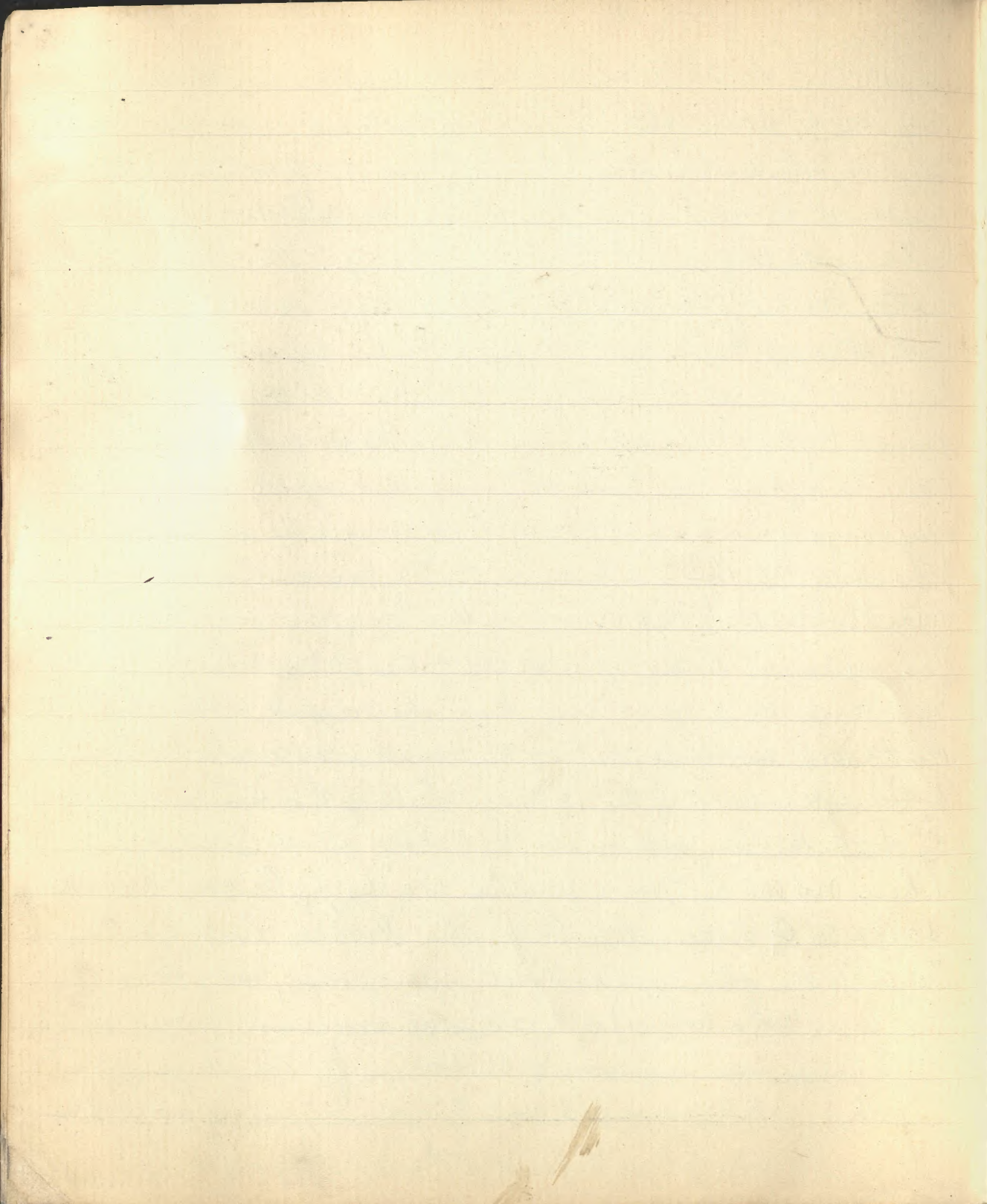
public through belonging to the Wierfeld T. Wierfeld Association and being engaged in promoting Dr. Wierfeld's medical missionary work among the fishermen of northern Newfoundland and Labrador. She is a three-masted schooner of graceful lines, one hundred thirty<sup>five</sup> feet long over all and one hundred fifty five tons register. Her equipment includes a seventy five horse power Dölvenerine gasoline-kerosene engine as auxiliary. Her master ~~is~~ was Captain Harris C. Pickels, a deep sea master-mariner of many years' experience. With his approval, Captain Comer was engaged as ice pilot for the voyage. The vessel was to be delivered to the Museum's use at St. Anthony, N. F., or Battle Harbor, Labrador, on 1 July, and everything looked favorable for the accomplishment of our desires. The writer was instructed to accompany the vessel as the representative of the Museum in charge of the relief work.

Delayed by her work for the mission the "George B. Cluett" was not freed at St. Anthony for the Crocker Land Expedition work until noon of 10 July and then it was necessary for her to come to Sydney, N. S., for kerosene and gasoline and for ~~the~~ supplies which the Museum wished to send to Etah, ~~it being Mr.~~

(on account of

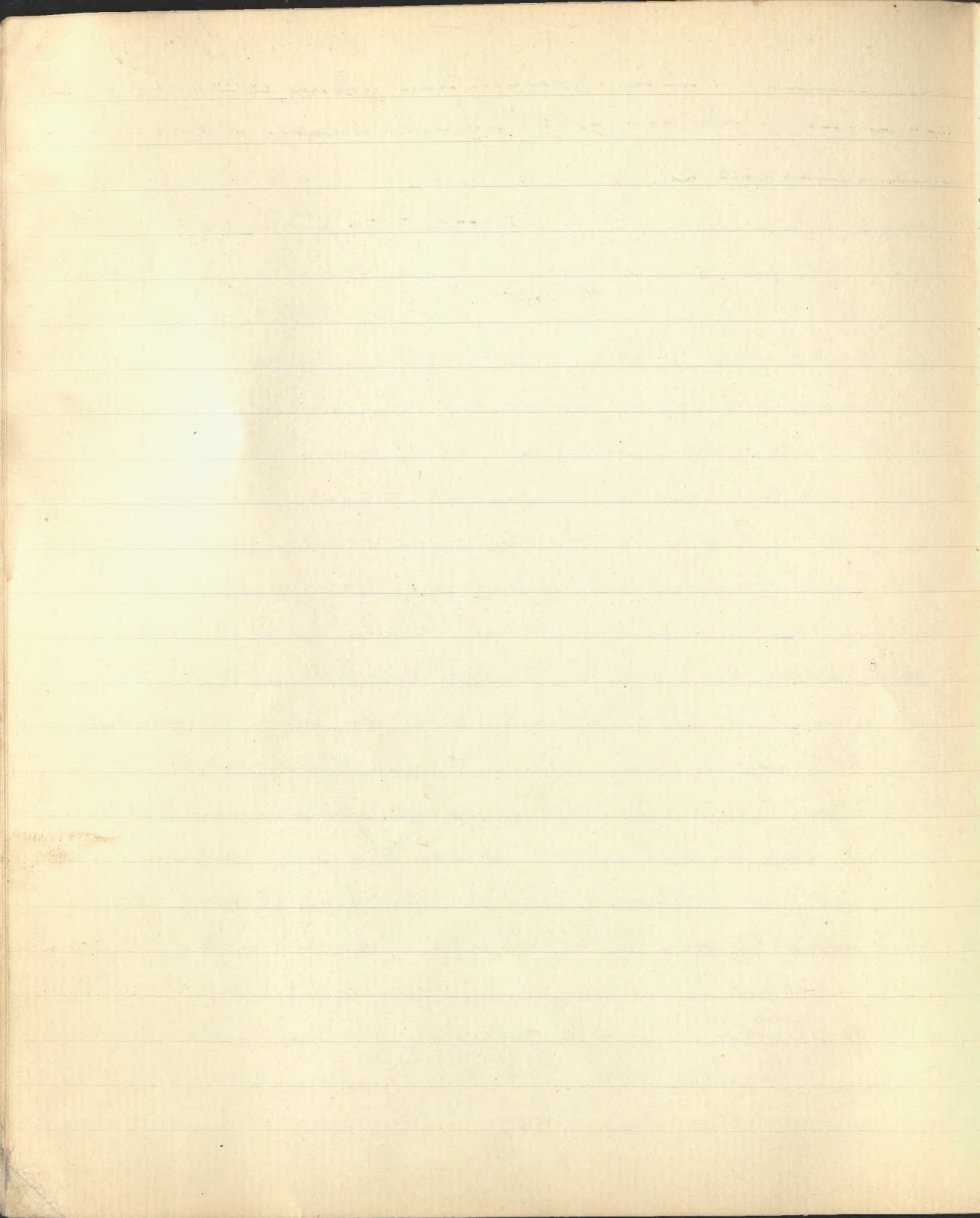


Mac Millan's desire to spend a third year in the arctic to carry on some studies which he had not been able to make, while so much of his time and energy were employed in caring for the administrative work of the large enterprise under his charge. As matters eventuated, it was fortunate that these supplies were taken north, though they were not used for the purpose for which they were procured and forwarded. Six days were consumed by the schooner in making the voyage from St Anthony to Sydney, so that she was not ready to receive our cargo of coal and provisions until the afternoon of Friday the 16<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to the energetic assistance of Captain A. J. Morrison of the Ingraham Supply Co., repairs to the windlass of the schooner <sup>were effected</sup> and the kerosene and gasoline that she needed were gotten on board ~~in spite~~ so that the vessel was ready to leave by the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup>, in spite of the intervention of the Saturday afternoon holiday and Sunday when no one in Nova Scotia works, if he can avoid doing so. ¶ Meanwhile Captain Pickels had gotten together an almost entirely new crew, only three of the men who brought the vessel around from Boston to Sydney remaining on board for the voyage to Etah. ~~When we set out from Sydney at 6 o'clock~~ The men upon whom depended the success of our enter-



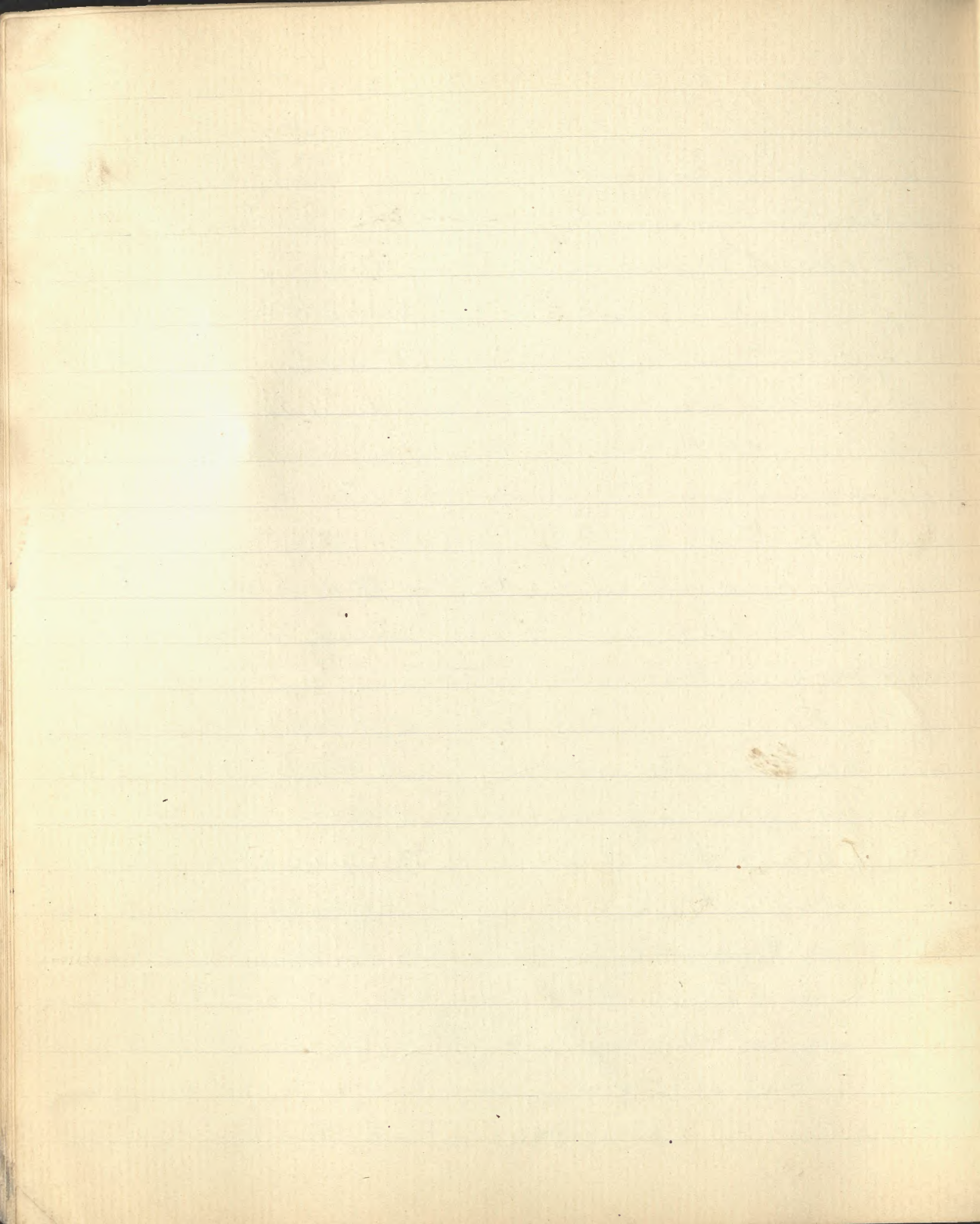


prise were, in addition to the Captain, as follows: 8  
~~in the afternoon of Monday 19 July, there were on board~~  
~~besides Captain Pickels, Captain Comer and myself, the~~  
~~following as crew.~~ Michael Davis, first mate, Dan Norman,  
second mate, William Fiander (or Faander), Ralph Parsons, William  
Mac Dougall, Ward Taylor and Williams Mendore, seamen,  
all natives of Newfoundland, <sup>except Mac Dougall, who was a Nova Scotian,</sup> Melrose Cotton of Melrose,  
Mass., engineer, Nathan Hiltz, of Mahone Bay, N.S., cook,  
and Charles F. Murphy, of Mt. Sinai, (L.I.) N.Y., cabin boy  
and steward. The two mates, Fiander, Parsons and the  
cook were the only members of this crew who had ever  
seen service at sea or who knew the difference between a  
sheet and a block, but all were willing enough to work.  
The three Williams were distinguished as "Uncle Billy", "Mac"  
and "French Ben", while the cook's sobriquet was "Yankee  
Nathan" in spite of his German origin. Captain Pickels's  
home is Mahone Bay, N.S., but he is of American birth  
and retains American citizenship. All except Norman,  
the engineer and the cook were the holdovers from  
the crew that brought the "Cluett" to Sydney, the others  
being wholly new to the vessel. Mate Davis had had ex-  
perience as a fisherman on the Grand Banks and elsewhere  
and as a sailor in coasting vessels, second mate Norman  
had seen service as a Jackie in the United States navy  
and on coasters, Parsons had been sealing from St. John's



The cook had been all over the world in all kinds of vessels for nearly fifty years, though he did not look his 64 yrs. Newfoundland. Captain Pickett ran away to sea when he was thirteen years old and had been master of sailing and steam vessels <sup>visiting</sup> ~~in~~ all parts of the world for <sup>more than twenty years</sup> ~~nearly a quarter~~ of a century when, in 1911, he entered the service of the Grenfell ~~to~~ Medical Mission and began to make frequent trips <sup>to St. Anthony, Newfoundland, and</sup> along the Labrador in the "George B. Cluett", ministering to the needs of the various stations.

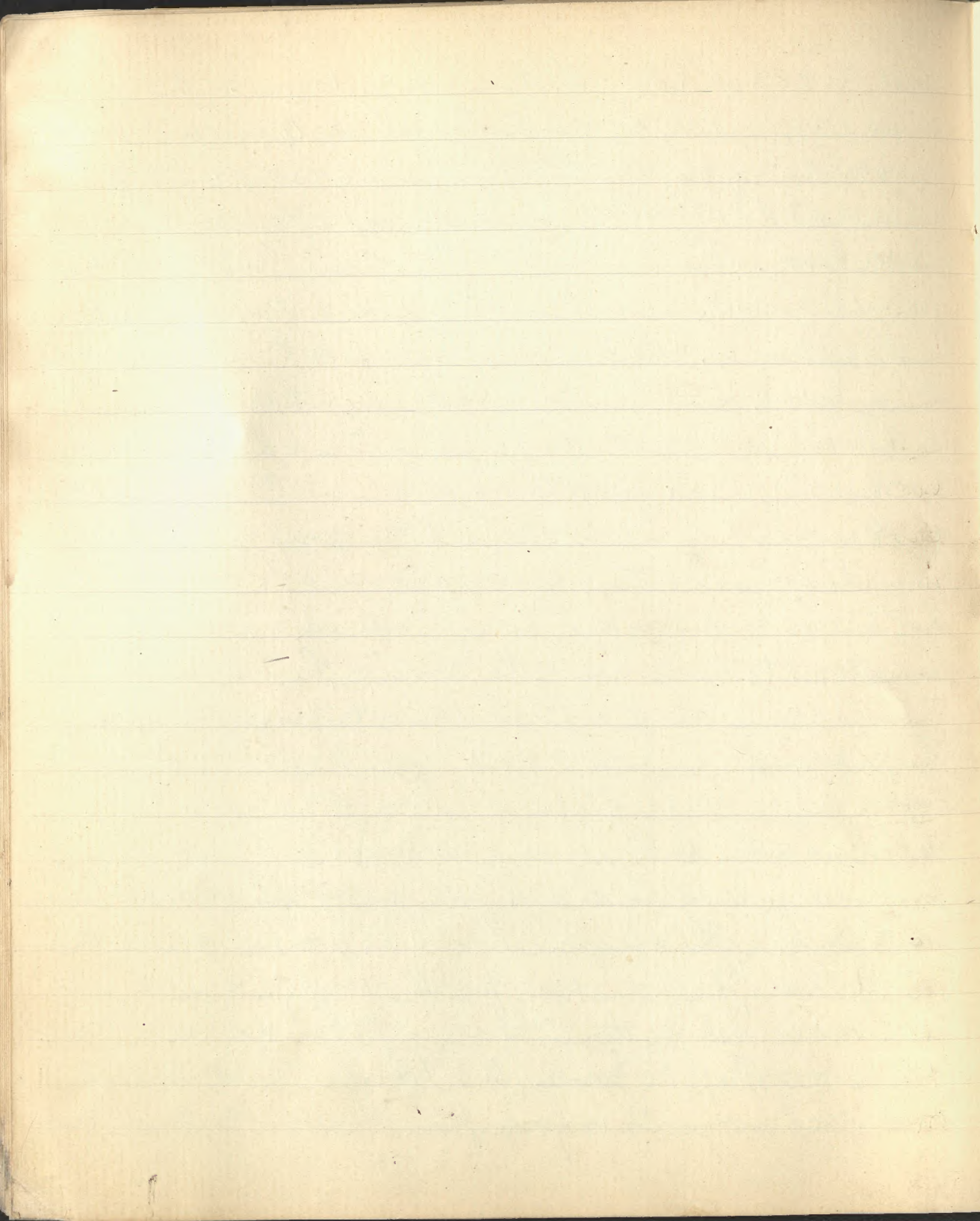
At precisely six o'clock of the beautiful afternoon of Monday the nineteenth of July, lines were cast off from Ingraham's Wharf, the motor was started and we got under way for the Far North, full of anticipations of an agreeable and interesting voyage to a rarely visited portion of the globe and a safe return to civilization and home in the early autumn. Like many deep-water ship masters Captain Pickett and Captain Comer are great story tellers, and the first evening of our long voyage was made memorable to me by their narration of some of their varied experiences. At 8 o'clock there were indications of a breeze and we hoisted sail. ~~as we were~~ Soon afterward the engine refused to work, but the wind freshened a bit and we made fair progress during the night. The wind died out late the next afternoon, but our run for the first 24 hours was 135 knots - a rate that would if main.



tained put us at Etah in three weeks time. After supper we unpacked the victrola, which Admiral Peary was sending by us to Ootah, who was one of his four Eskimos at the North Pole, and started a concert on the quarter deck. The behavior of "Chim", Captain Pickels' year-old full-blooded Newfoundland dog was comical in the extreme. He had never seen or heard such a thing before and he did not know what to make of it. He looked at it with amazed interest and curiosity, cocked his head first to one side and then to the other, cast inquiring looks around the group of men standing about, and then came around to each of us in turn and sniffed and listened. Satisfied at length as to the source of the music, he curled up beside the machine and settled down to enjoy himself.

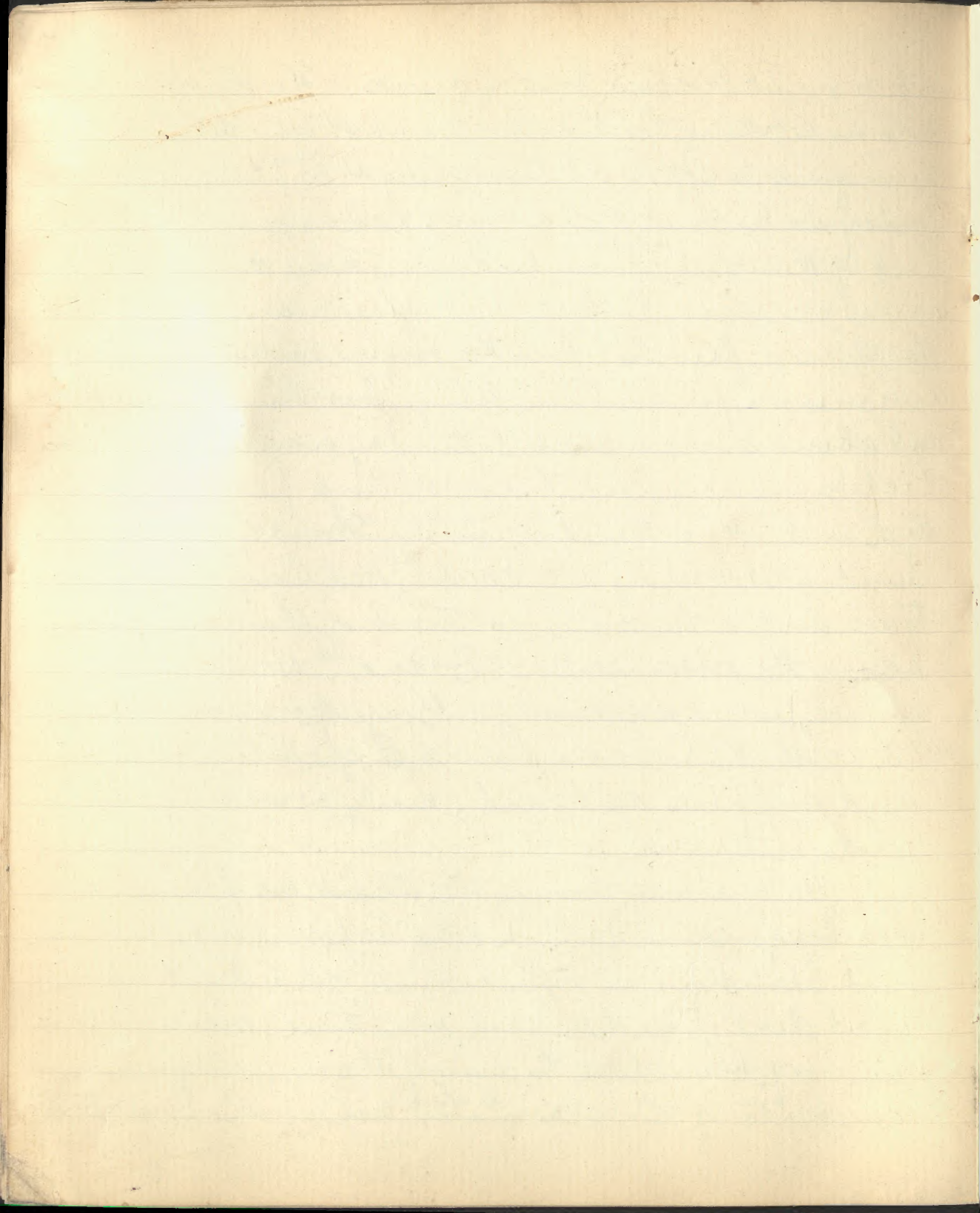
The performance was a good reproduction of the well-known advertising picture entitled "His master's voice".

Calm weather or light winds were our lot for the next four days and we did little more than drift along northward. The engine had been overhauled by the its builders <sup>in</sup> preparation for this voyage and had been declared by them to be in perfect order when it left the shop in June, but trouble had developed on the schooner's voyage from Boston to St. Anthony



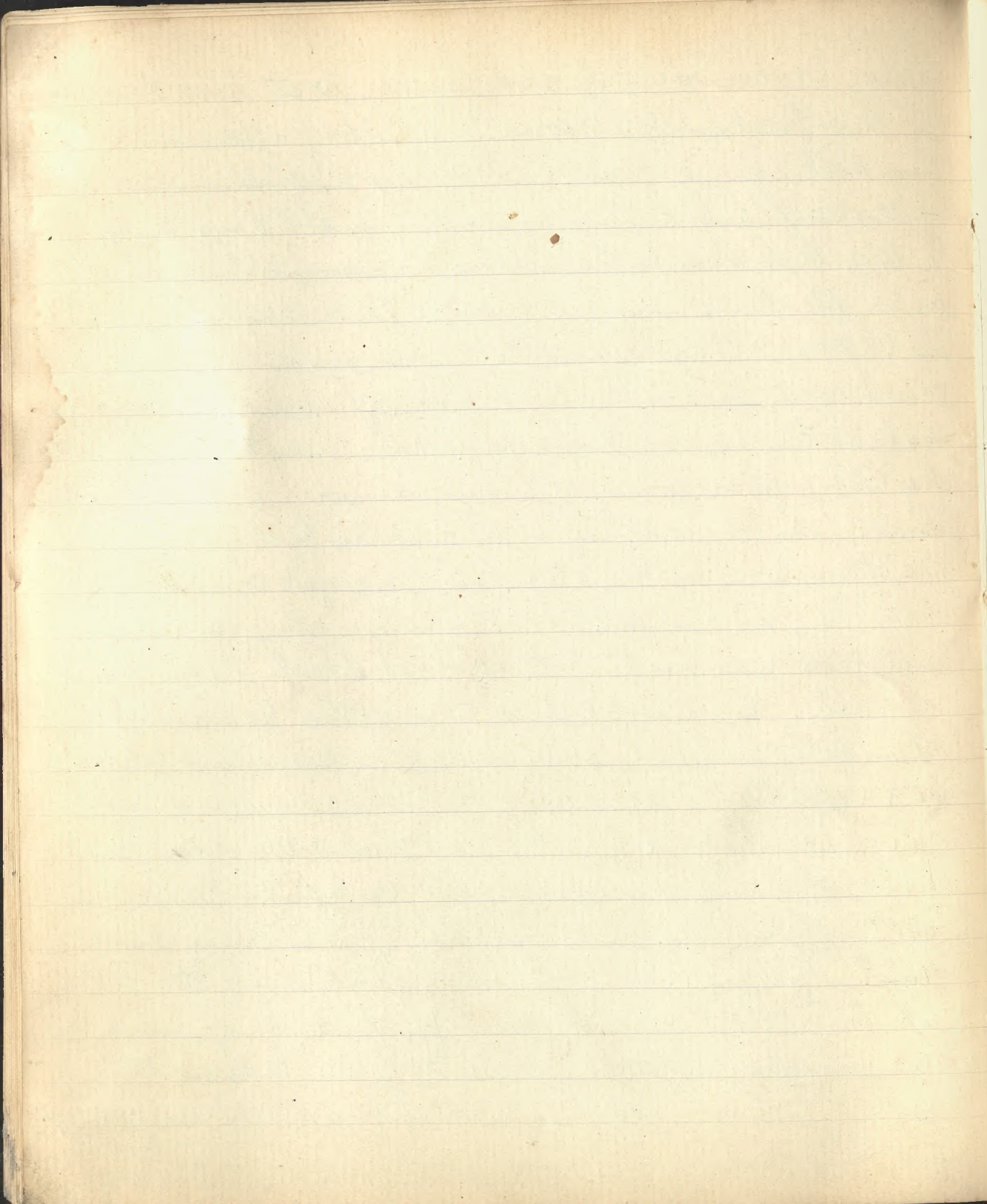
and now it became more acute. The flywheel persisted in working loose on the crank shaft despite of all the engineer's efforts at tightening it in place, and on Friday we learned that a crack had appeared in the hub of the wheel, <sup>probably</sup> caused by driving home the <sup>shaft</sup> key as often as was necessary to keep the engine running at all. The cracked flywheel put the engine entirely out of commission for the time being, but the wind improved and about eight o'clock Saturday evening Captain Pickels announced that we had passed Cape Rich and were therefore in the Strait of Belle Isle. Sunday morning we could <sup>see</sup> Red Bay in the distance and a few miles northeast of there the place where the steamsealer "Diana", miles out of her course, went aground on Barge Rocks on 16 July, 1913, with the Crocker Land Expedition party and supplies on board, nearly wrecking the whole enterprise.

On our way through the strait we passed many ice bergs, some of which were imposing in dimensions and beautiful in appearance, and I got up a good deal of enthusiasm over them, never before having been close to any of these dangerous derelicts of the sea. Later experiences in Davis





Strait, Disco Sound and farther north took the edge  
 off these first impressions. Sunday afternoon at  
 six o'clock we cast anchor off the fishing village  
 of Battle Harbor, having used up six days in making  
 a trip that should have been accomplished in three  
 and one-half days at most. Monday was spent by  
~~the~~ Captain Pickels and the engineer in the primitive  
 blacksmith shop of the little fishing hamlet improvising  
 as best they could a yoke of oak and iron to prevent the  
 fly wheel from going to pieces in service, tools and  
 materials for making better repairs being lacking.  
 At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we got under way  
 again for the north. Right here is where ~~the~~ a great  
 mistake was made, which cost dearly to all con-  
 cerned. The relief expedition in the "George B Cluett"  
 should have been abandoned as being inadvisable,  
 but Captain Pickels said that the engine would  
 run all right when needed and the vessel could  
 make the trip successfully, Captain Comer, ar-  
 guing from his own extensive <sup>experience</sup> in sailing vessels  
 without auxiliary power, said that the schooner  
 ought to be competent for the voyage and I  
 was anxious to deliver to Mr. Mac Millan the  
 supplies which he was supposed to be in absolute  
 (to bring back to civilization the returning members of the C.S.R. staff and

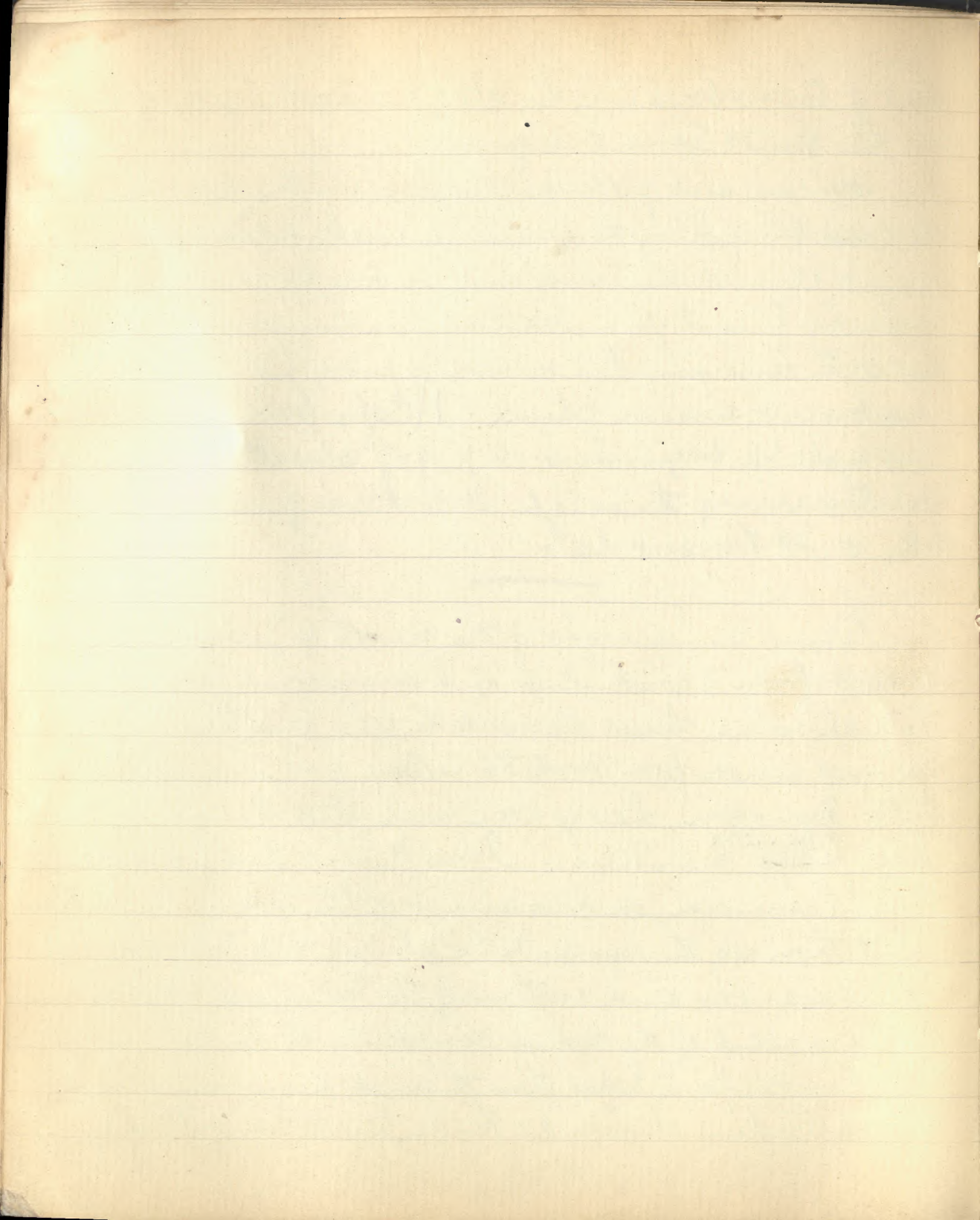


need of to enable him to spend another year of study in the Smith Sound region

We ran out of Balle Harbor under power, but, the wind being fair, the engine was shut down as soon as we cleared the land and we bowled along under sail in fine style. We had however scarcely settled down to enjoying this method of progress than great excitement arose over Chum. Copy from Guadeloupe. 1915 note bk. beginning on p. 9 of "Cluett Voyage" + continuing through Martinique 1915 note bk + St Vincent do.

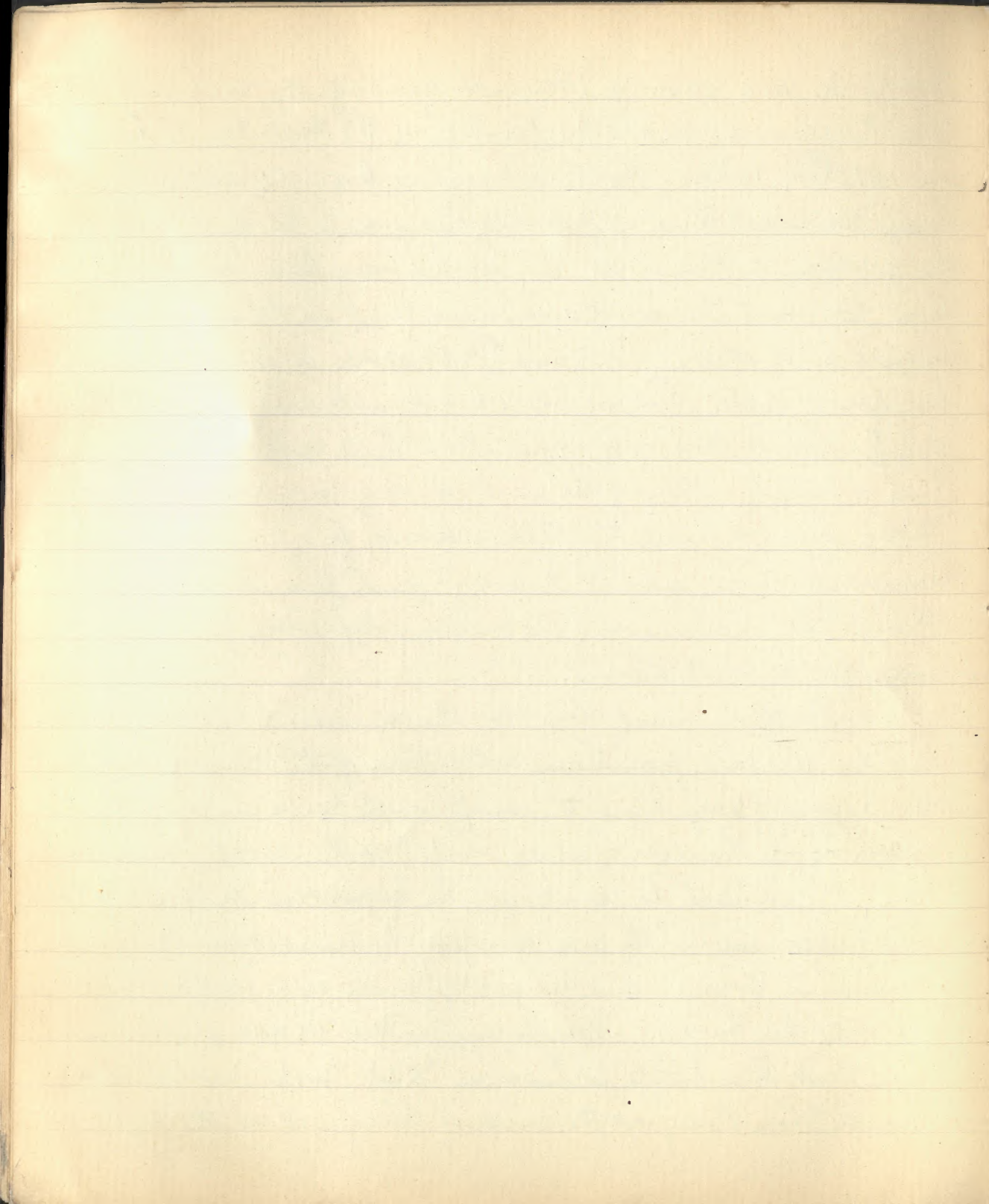
---

About midnight of the ninth of July I was aroused from a good sleep and summoned from my bunk to welcome Knud Rasmussen, who had <sup>just</sup> arrived by the ice-cap route from North Star Bay, accompanied by Peter Freuchen, Lauge Koch and three Eskimos, Nehitalo, <sup>Inuktitok</sup> Lago and Tobias. I was particularly glad to see Mr. Rasmussen on account of his international reputation as the sympathetic student and portrayal of the character and customs of the Greenland Eskimos and on account of the many courtesies he had shown to the Crocker Land Expedition through his scientific and trading station at Thule, North Star Bay.



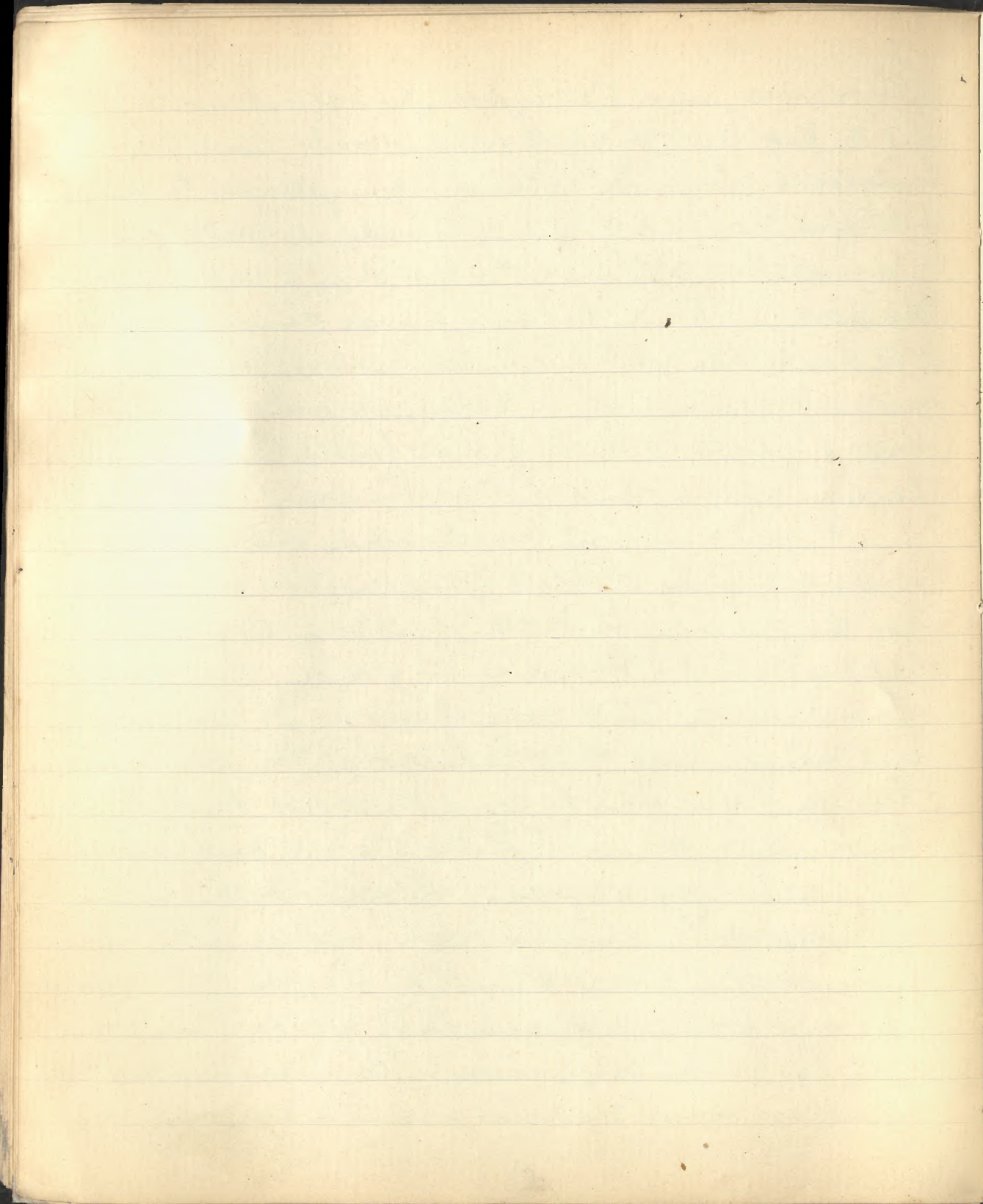
Mr. Koch is a young Danish geologist, nephew of Captain Koch who made the traverse of the Greenland Ice cap in 1913<sup>(?)</sup>, whom Mr Rasmussen brought with him to map the coast line of Melville Bay and to map and study the geology of Peary Land, it having been Mr. R.'s intention to visit the northernmost land on the globe in the summer of 1916. Tobias Gabrielsen is a south Greenlandic of note, having been a valuable member of the important Danish expedition that explored and mapped a large portion of the east coast of Greenland in(?) There was much to talk about, but we broke off our conversation about 2 a.m. and <sup>I</sup> turned in again, though the excitement of the meeting kept sleep from my eyes for several hours.

Influenced by Mr Rasmussen's opinion regarding the unsafe ~~position~~ situation of the "Cluett" in Parker Snow Bay and the supposed certainty of the coming <sup>N.S.S.</sup> of the new relief ship for the Crocker Land Expedition, I decided to embrace the opportunity offered by his presence with six empty kahmootiks to transfer Captain Corner and myself and our most important effects to Thule. Furthermore Mr Rasmussen assured me that his little schooner "Kap York" would be at North Star Bay at the end of August or the beginning



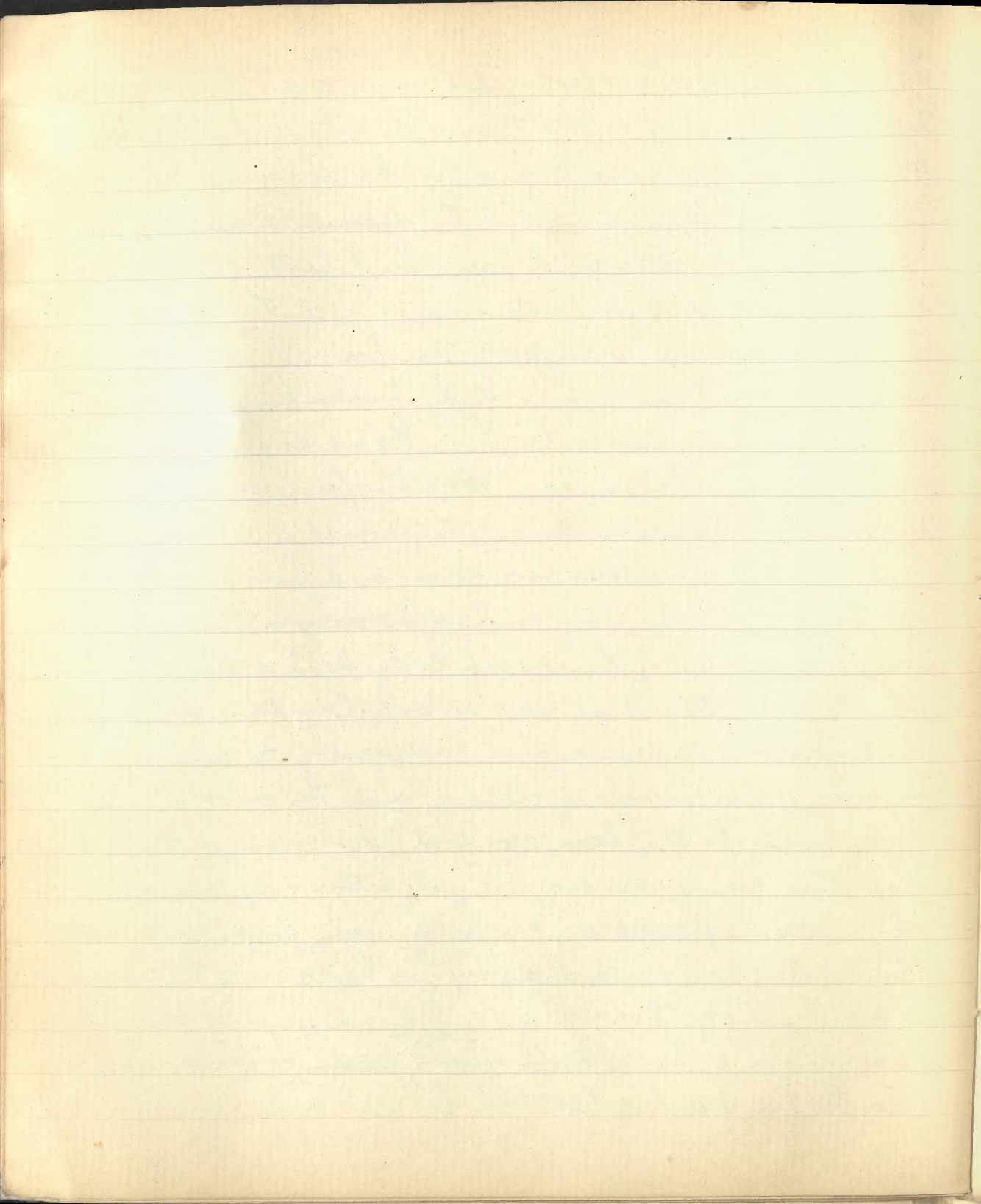
of September, and that, if both the Expedition relief ship and the "Kap York" failed to come, I could have his strong motorboat "Inger Lis" to transport myself and the members of the Expedition party to South Greenland for the purpose of connecting with one of the last ships of the season for Denmark. Events, however, proved the uncertainty of plans made for travel in the Arctic, for the "Cluett" reached America safely in September and while the other means of exit to civilization failed to accomplish their purpose, - but that anticipates my story.

Preparations were hastily made and at ~~at~~ mid-night of 11 July the fleet of kahmootiks got under way for the journey to North Star Bay, Captain Comer riding on Peter Grauchen's sledge while Knud <sup>is seen</sup> Rasmussen took care of me. It was not <sup>with-</sup>out misgivings that I deserted the schooner, though I was glad to leave the vessel that had been the source of so much <sup>mental</sup> distress to me and had been my home for a year. The ride over the ice cap was comfortable and enjoyable, although the sky was clouded over so that the surface of the snow was not frozen so much as it would have been, had the night been clear. The highest part of the route is 1800 or 2000 feet above the sea, and from



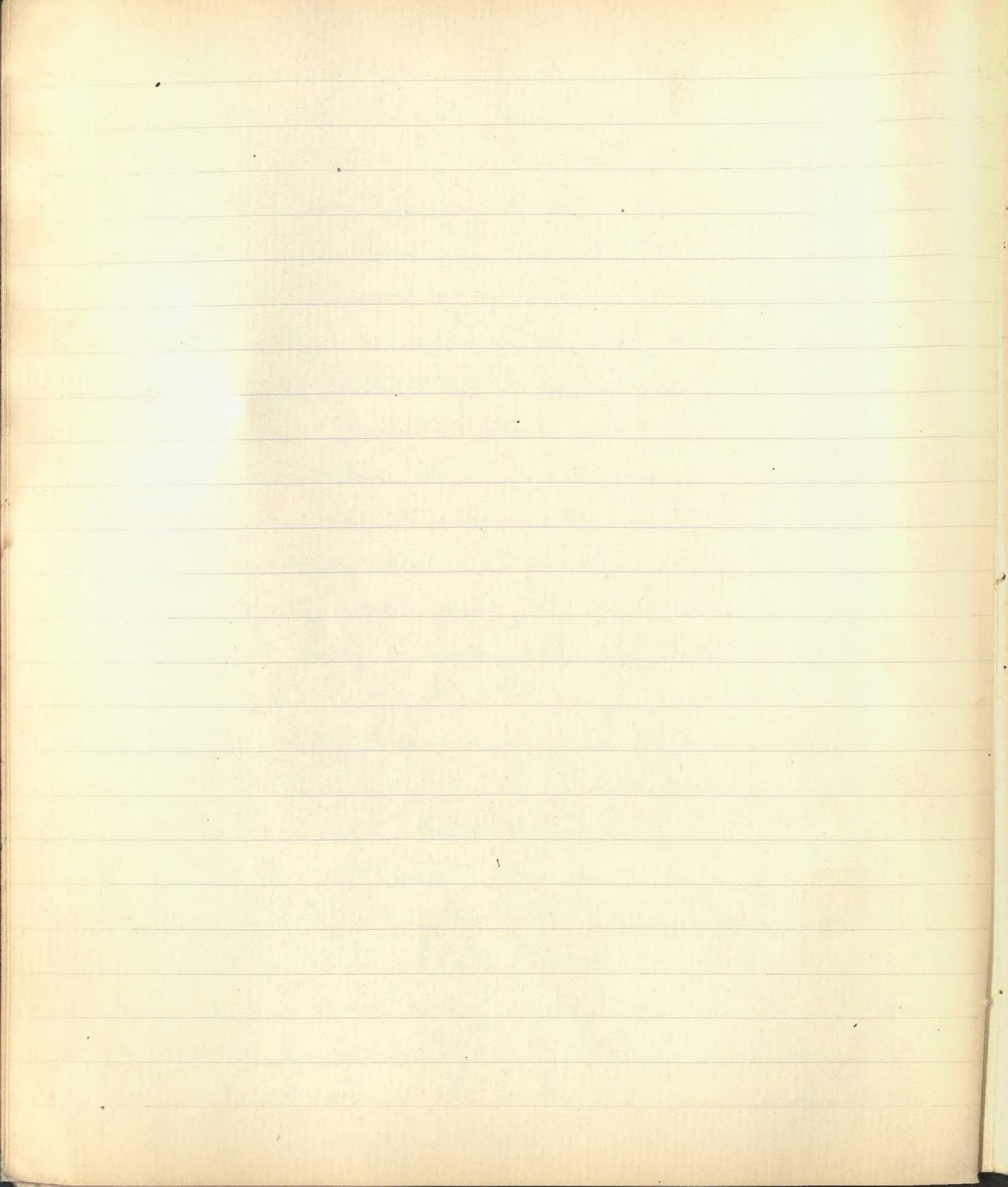


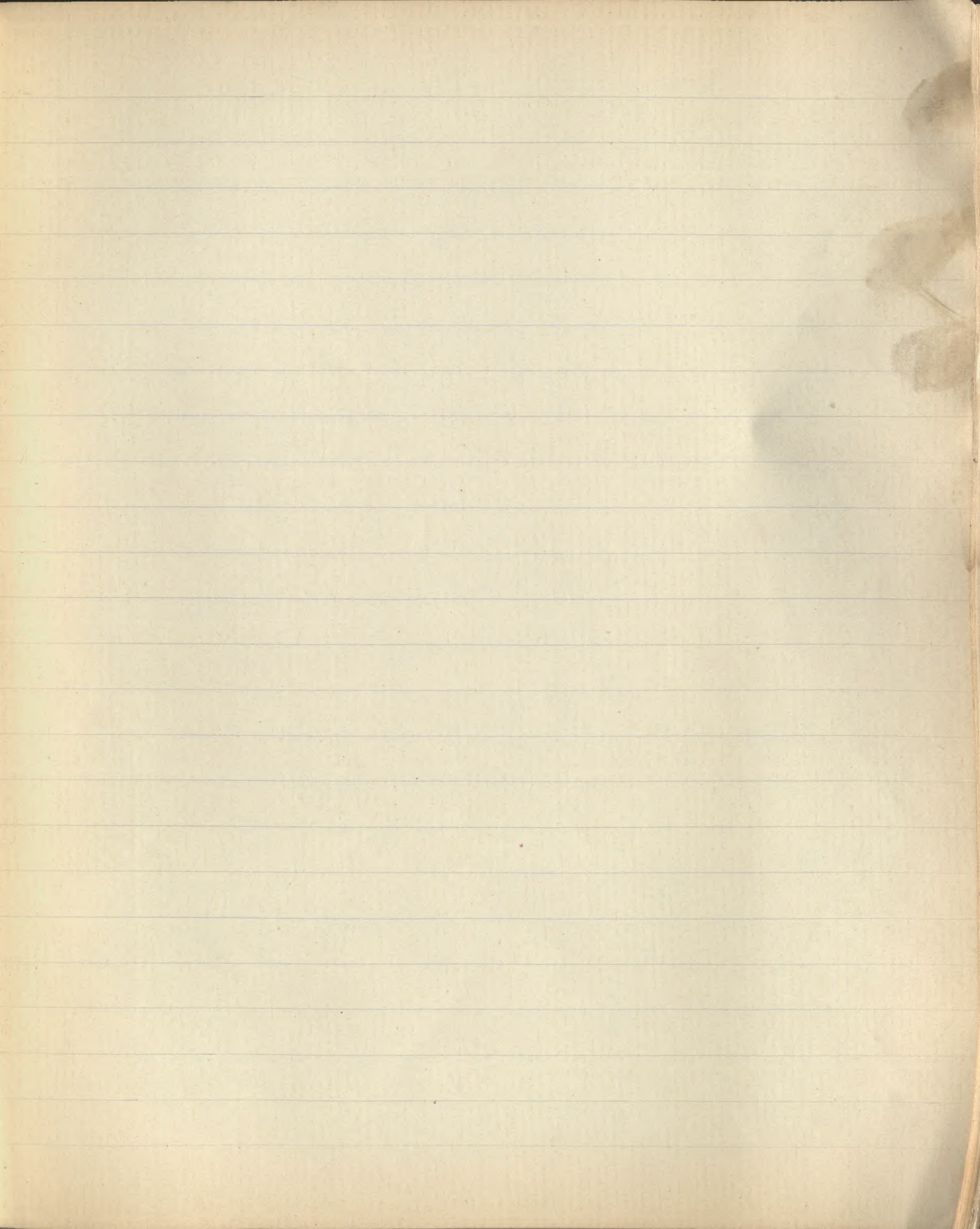
many points <sup>along it</sup>, we had extended views over the famous  
 "North Water" of Boffin Bay. Its comparative freedom  
 from ice raised our hopes for the early arrival of a <sup>new</sup>  
 relief ship. As we crossed the ~~extreme~~ head of the Peto-  
 wick glacier and looked down the length of that great  
 ice-stream and across the rugged country lying between  
 its lower reaches and North Star Bay, I was impressed  
<sup>even</sup> more deeply than before with the foolhardiness of the attempt  
 to walk from the schooner to Thule that was made by Norman  
 and Taylor in February. Had they persisted in following  
 the route that they were taking, they would surely have lost their  
 way amid the mountains and gorges and have died of cold  
 and hunger in the long night of ~~the season~~ that was upon them.  
 Our long descent of the ice cap to the head of the valley lead-  
 ing to North Star Bay was an exhilarating slide, the  
 dogs having to maintain full gallop to keep out of  
 the way of the rushing sledges, and the last plunge of  
 fifty yards to the ~~low~~ ground was made on the rear  
 points of the runners, myself sitting as far back on  
 the sledge as possible, Mr. Rasmussen holding back on  
 the upstanders and digging his heels into the snow  
 and the dogs trailing on behind. It being now  
 about six o'clock ~~halt~~ <sup>a two</sup> ~~hours~~ <sup>halt</sup> was made  
 in the lee of a big boulder for rest and breakfast.

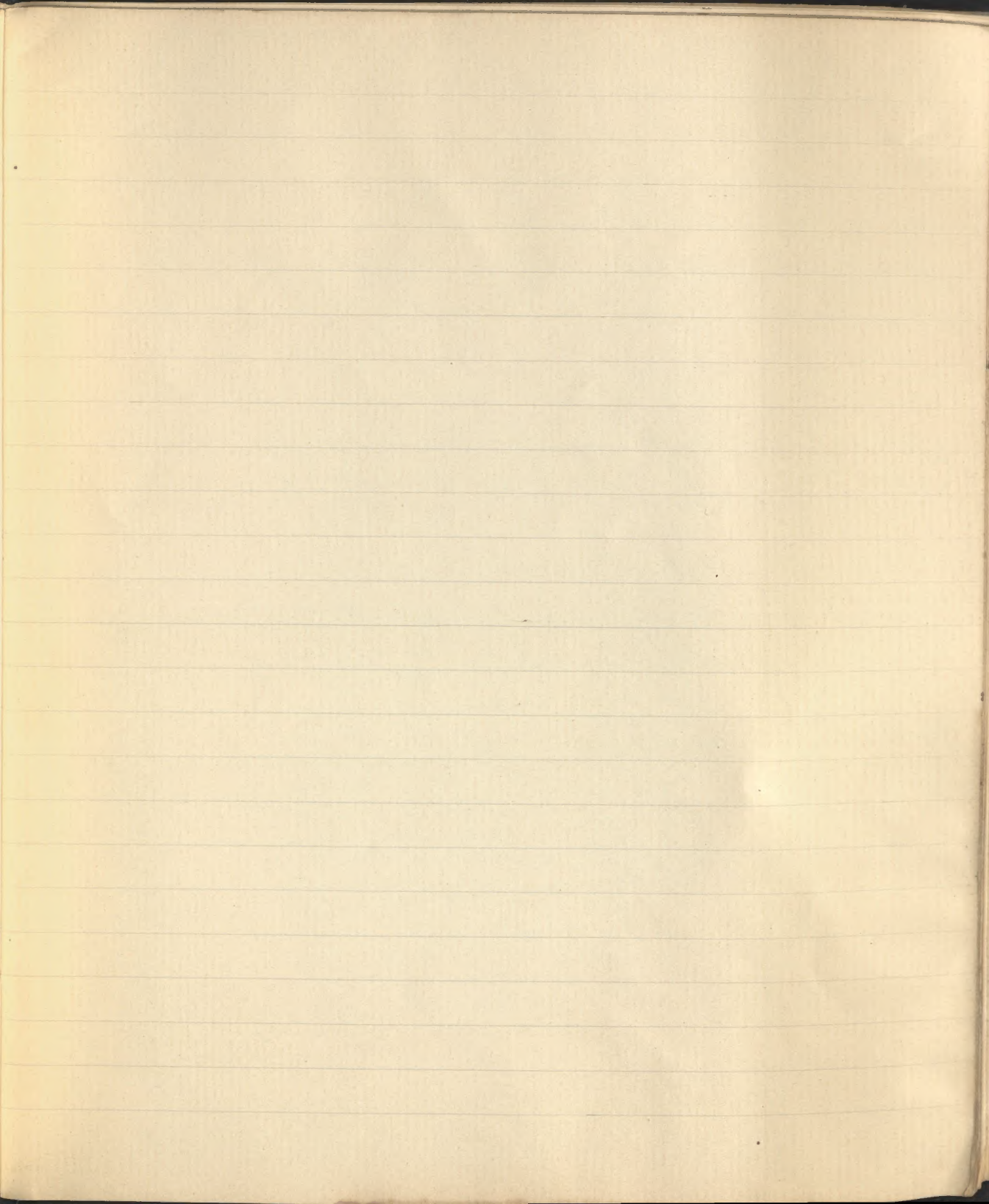


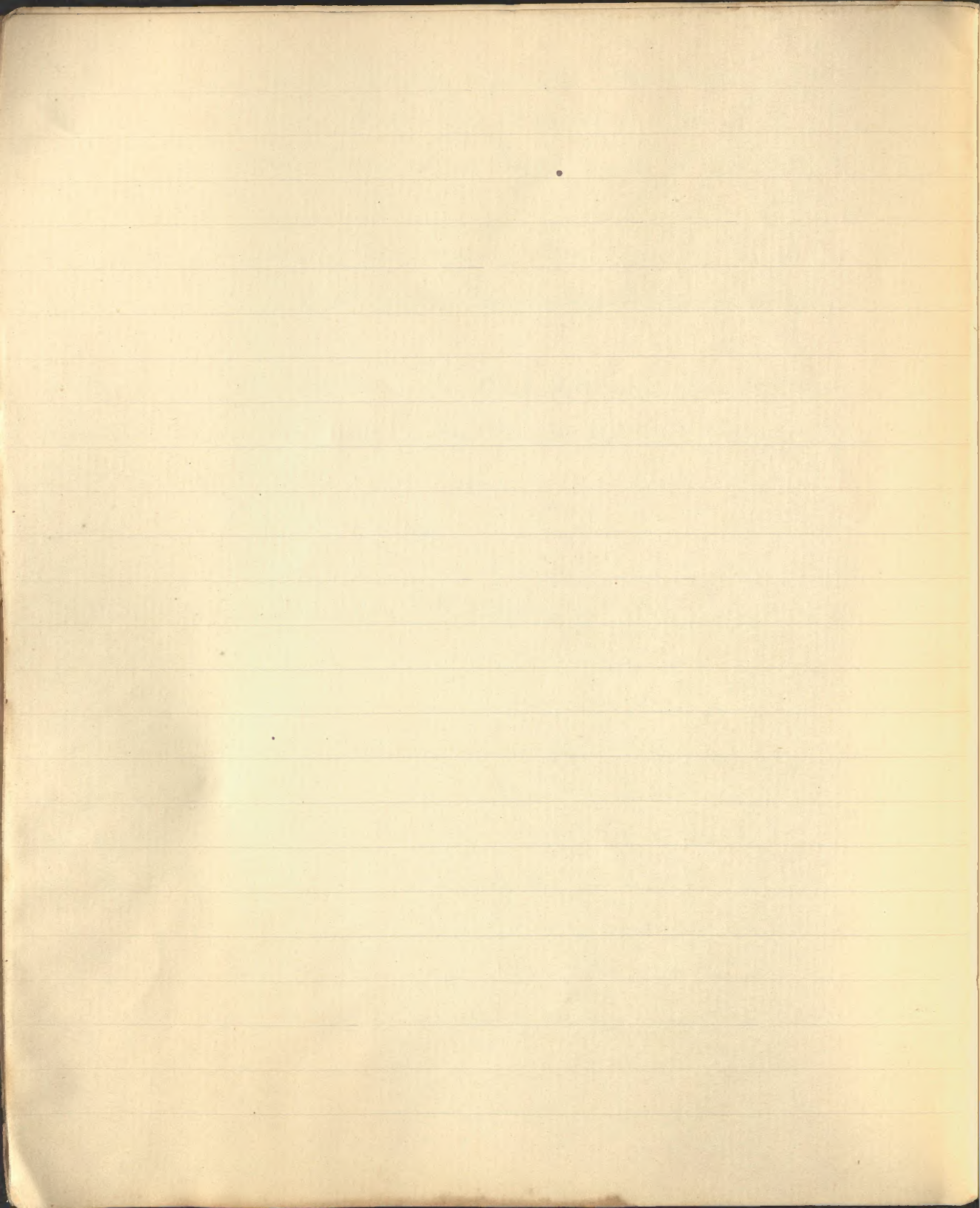
I was glad enough to stretch out for a time on some skins after the night's experience, since this was my first long kahmootik ride after coming back from Cape York six months before. About ~~ten~~<sup>eight</sup> o'clock we got under way again for the ten mile stretch still before us. The snow was gone from the valley for the most part, but here and there a patch helped us on our way though the dogs made good progress over moss and grass and even among stones, so that Rasmussen's promise that I might sit on the kahmootik from one end of the journey to the other was fulfilled. About ten o'clock we made our way across the bordering loose cakes of ice onto the still firm ice of North Star Bay and a few minutes later were welcomed by Mr Ekblaw and Dr Hunt at the headquarters of the southern substation of the Crocker Land Expedition.

The change to North Star Bay was ~~an~~ agreeable and beneficial, and the time passed pleasantly and rapidly, especially at first before we began to be anxious about the arrival of the new relief ship. The weather was good and interesting, excursions in all directions were made on foot, by canoe and in the motorboat









Come to excavate refuse heaps near Stah this summer  
supplementing valuable work done <sup>near</sup> North Star Bay  
last summer

making botanical and ornithological  
studies this summer

100231704

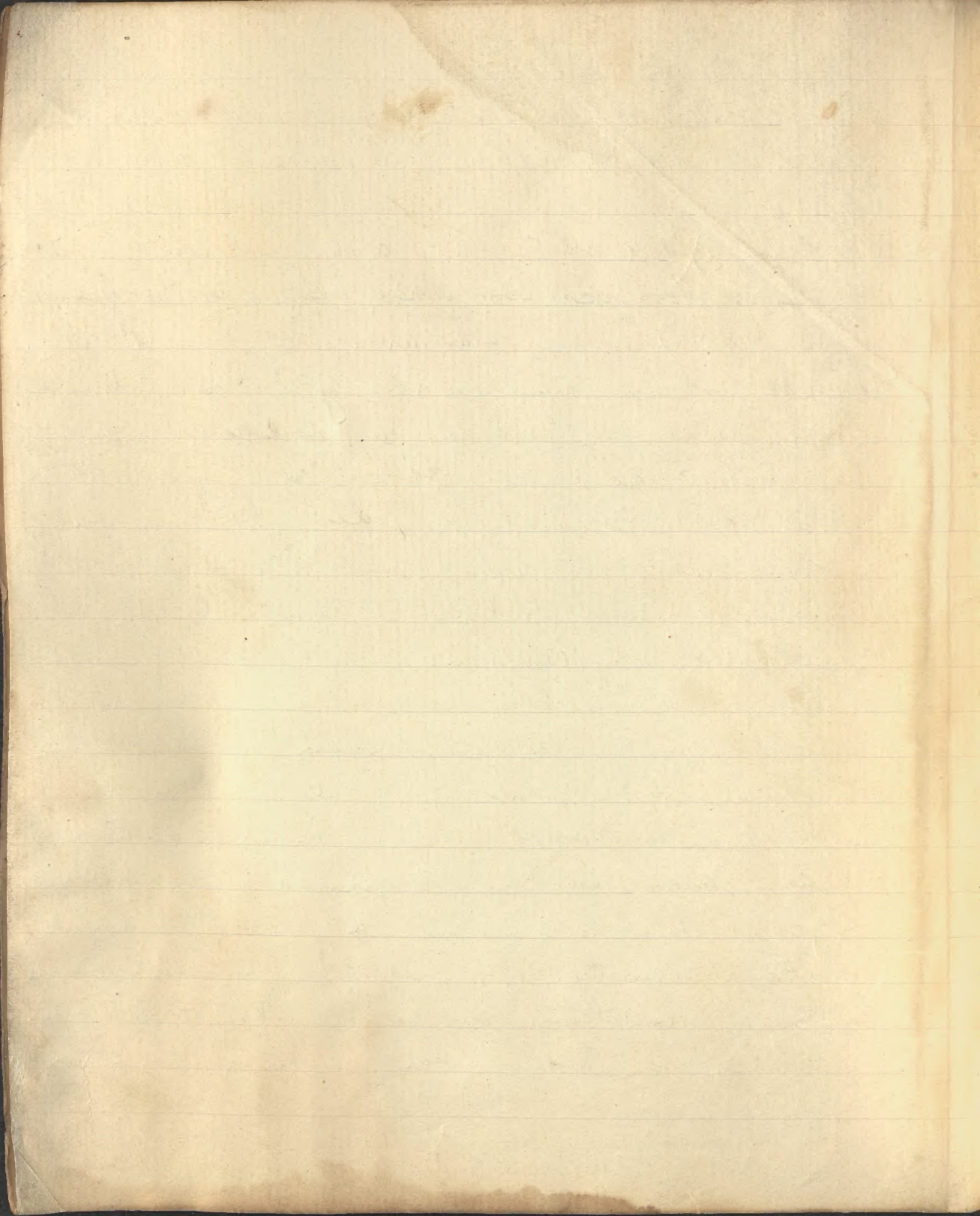


AMNH LIBRARY



<sup>copy</sup> by sledge twentyfourth) Mac Millan, Comer, Small

Left Etah 24 March. All well. Mac Millan starting next day with three Eskimos to map certain portions southeast coast Ellesmerland and make studies as far as Lancaster sound returning Etah ~~with~~ <sup>on</sup> June. My own sledge journey eleven hundred miles ~~sixty days~~ <sup>six days</sup> accomplished without serious accident. Arrived Godhavn twentieth May. Spent four days on barkentine "Danmark" frozen in near North Star Bay. Vessel and crew all right with coal enough for journey Etah and ~~out to~~ <sup>to</sup> South Greenland, <sup>this summer</sup> Knud Rasmussen and two assistants besides several Eskimos were leaving Northstarbay fifth April on trip Fortconger and Pearyland. I left Capelfork eighth April and consumed twenty days crossing Melville Bay. Mostly good weather but deep snow on ice. Arrived Upernivik second May and left on sea <sup>unusual conditions</sup> ice three days later. Winter in Danish Greenland open warm little ice spring late cold heavy sea ice <sup>and</sup> much snow down to Diskobay. Delayed eight days South Upernivik account fresh snow. Ekblaw there but coming to Godhavn July await Crockerland Expedition relief ship. I crossed Vaigat open boat. Sledges broke through rotten ice Mudderbay Disko twenty-seventh May. Left Godhavn "Hans Egede" tenth July.



# Katdla, Insomhedens Spiel.

Katdla stod indenfor sin Husgaard og  
sag, - og dog gik <sup>hvis ikke ind</sup> der var  
nord i Vejrets <sup>vindhaandede</sup> ~~Vejr~~ <sup>plygt nu Kraft</sup> ~~Kraft~~ der  
gjorde hendes Sind godt og holdt hendes  
fast inde i Stormen og Kielden <sup>hvor Husene</sup>  
Søerne <sup>kom rullende</sup> slog ind i den alle Veg, <sup>og</sup>  
brød mod Klipperne, der brød deres  
trodygt lod dem rende Panden mod  
i deres hvide Valde. Man horte Broy  
paa Broy og Bield, og saa Broddenes  
hvi drrende Braede slaa op i Vin-  
den som Brey i ~~den~~ Havets  
Broy ~~der~~ afmestigt saug om af-  
mestige Vrede ind mod Gulvene  
der stod tavse og stilles og lod  
Aegret gaa hen over sig.

~~Katdla kunde gaa <sup>hvor</sup> ~~hvor~~ hun  
saa <sup>hvor</sup> ~~hvor~~ Solen <sup>komme</sup>  
rullende mod Land, men hendes  
Angst slog ~~saar~~ hurtigt over i velgør-  
rende Følelse af Lykke. <sup>hvor</sup> ~~hvor~~  
Havet <sup>knuste</sup>~~

28

Left Etah twentyfourth March all well. ~~Saw Ekblaw well South Upernivik coming Godhavn await relief ship Am well expect any instructions Nyeloe Copenhagen Inform usual list plus Berkeley Crampton~~

Macmillan Comer Small <sup>South Upernivik</sup>  
~~All well Etah March also Ekblaw May Send me any instructions Nyeloe Copenhagen Home via Norway Inform usual list plus Berkeley Crampton~~

Macmillan Comer Small well Etah and March also Ekblaw South Upernivik middle May Ship Danmark all right apic  
Cable me Nyeloe Copenhagen

All well cable me Nyeloe Copenhagen

